

Aviation Safety Measures Are Latest Victory for Tireless Flight 3407 Families

WESTERN NEW YORK – Representatives Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Brian Higgins (NY-27), Kathy Hochul (NY-26) and Tom Reed (NY-29) welcomed today's announcement by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) of the much-awaited completion of landmark new rules to address pilot fatigue.

"Today marks a very important day in pilot safety," said Congresswoman Slaughter. "Finally, guidance has been provided by the FAA that will help assure the American public that when they step into a plane, their pilot is well-rested. I am proud to have worked on the legislation that required this rule and amazed by the work done especially by the family members who worked through their grief to make the skies safer for us all. While I'm pleased we have a final rule on pilot fatigue, we know from the findings of the National Transportation Safety Board, that it was not the only factor contributing to the tragic crash in Clarence two years ago. There must be more done to address pilot training, especially on techniques as basic as how to fly in ice when landing in Buffalo."

"The National Transportation Safety Board has identified pilot fatigue as a problem for over two decades," said Congressman Higgins, "so this rule was long overdue. Nonetheless, we are pleased that the day is finally here when everyone who has fought tirelessly on behalf of those who lost their lives in the crash Flight 3407 will see the fruits of their labor. I join my Western New York colleagues in celebrating the release of the pilot fatigue rule to ensure that the American flying public can feel safe that the person sitting in the cockpit when they board that plane is adequately trained, prepared and rested."

"Today's rule has been a longtime coming for the Flight 3407 families, and all members of the flying public," said Congresswoman Hochul. "I thank the families of the victims for all the work that's been done to increase the safety of our skies. While today's announcement is good news, there's still much more work to be done to ensure a tragedy like Colgan Air Flight 3407 never happens again."

"I appreciate that the FAA is finally moving on these overdue fatigue rules and I commend the families of the victims for keeping this matter in the forefront," said Congressman Reed. "These rules serve as a step forward for safety and I thank the FAA for their work."

Pilot fatigue was a contributing factor in the crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407, which took place in Clarence Center outside of Buffalo in February 2009. After the tragedy, Western New York Representatives, along with the Flight 3407 families, led a fight for legislation to reform aviation safety. Congress passed aviation legislation which, among other things, required the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to update flight-and-duty time rules and set minimum rest requirements for airline pilots by August 1, 2011. The DOT missed that deadline but local Congressmembers kept up the pressure, [leading a letter](#) signed by nearly 100 Members of the House of Representatives urging completion of the rules.

Below is a summary of the new time, duty and rest requirements, based on fatigue science, announced by the U.S. Department of Transportation today:

- **Additional rest time:** The new rules require a ten-hour minimum opportunity for rest prior to the duty period, a two-hour increase over the current rules.
- **Changes in the definition of rest time:** The rule also calls for measuring a pilot's rest period differently so that pilots can receive at least eight hours of sleep during that rest period. The current system calculates the commute time it takes for pilots to get from airports to hotels as rest time.
- **A decrease in maximum duty time:** Pilots currently can be on duty as long as 16 consecutive hours. Under the new rules, maximum duty time would range between 9 and 14 hours, depending on the start time and number of flight segments.
- **Addressing cumulative fatigue:** Provisions direct weekly and 28-day limits on the amount of time a pilot may be assigned any type of duty. Pilots would be given at least 30 consecutive hours free from duty on a weekly basis, a 25% increase over the current rules.
- **Airline responsibility & training:** Last year Congress directed airlines to develop a Fatigue Risk Management Plan. Companies will also be required to provide training updated every two years.

- **Personal responsibility:** Pilots will need to attest they are fit for duty as they sign the flight plan.

The rules requirement is for passenger airlines; however the FAA is encouraging air cargo companies to voluntarily adopt these rules. Western New York's Representatives were hopeful the rules would be a requirement across both industries.

Members of the Western New York delegation noted these changes are a long-time coming. Pilot fatigue rules have been on the National Traffic Safety Board's (NTSB) Most Wanted List for over twenty years.

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[Click here](#) to access the FAA fact sheet on the new rules.